



# CITY OF SELAH

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Selah, WA 98942

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September 19, 2024

Honorable Justices:

As mayor of the City of Selah, I respectfully request the Washington State Supreme Court reject the requested amendments to the Standards for Indigent Defense in CrR 3.1, CrRLJ 3.1 and JuCR 9.2.

The proposed revisions to the state's Standards for Indigent Defense will not solve current issues; but will instead create even greater challenges for cities than we currently are faced with such as:

1. Reduced case loads will require additional attorneys to do the same work currently handled.
2. Many current attorneys will not take on this type work and we already experience a severe shortage of people to address all legal matters for cities and counties. This will make it a more acutely severe shortage.
3. One reason many do not want to do public defender work is that they cannot make enough money when compared to other types of legal work. Ultimately this will cause cities to pay a lot more and to many more attorneys to handle the ever increasing work load. In effect this pays more for less productivity.
4. Due to current shortages of prosecutors and defenders, we are seeing district courts dismiss cases and/or reduce charges to send cases back to municipal courts creating even more of a burden on cities' ability to fund a growing demand for public defender requests.
5. Simply stated, these proposed amendments would create a financial demand that is not sustainable by the cities' ability to access funds. In Selah's case, we would need to hire 2 additional attorneys with a current cost, if they were available, of a quarter million dollars.

I have talked with other elected officials that share the same concerns; and we all see the need to be a part of the solution; but also feel these proposed changes are not the correct solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roger L. Bell

Selah Mayor

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**CITY OF SELAH**

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